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Household waste behaviours among a community sample in Iran: An application of the theory of planned behaviour

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ABSTRACT

Understanding the factors influencing recycling behaviour can lead to better and more effective recycling programs in a community. The goal of this study was to examine factors associated with household waste behaviours in the context of the theory of planned behaviour (TPB) among a community sample of Iranians that included data collection at time 1 and at follow-up one year later at time 2. Study participants were sampled from households under the coverage of eight urban health centers in the city of Qazvin. Of 2000 invited households, 1782 agreed to participate in the study. A self-reported questionnaire was used for assessing socio-demographic factors and the TPB constructs (i.e. attitude, subjective norms, perceived behavioural control, and intention). Furthermore, questions regarding moral obligation, self-identity, action planning, and past recycling behaviour were asked, creating an extended TPB. At time 2, participants were asked to complete a follow-up questionnaire on self-reported recycling behaviours. All TPB constructs had positive and significant correlations with each other. Recycling behaviour at time 1 (past behaviour) significantly related to household waste behaviour at time 2. The extended TPB explained 47% of the variance in household waste behaviour at time 2. Attitude, perceived behavioural control, intention, moral obligation, self-identity, action planning, and past recycling behaviour were significant predictors of household waste behaviour at time 2 in all models. The fact that the expanded TPB constructs significantly predicted household waste behaviours holds great promise for developing effective public campaigns and behaviour-changing interventions in a region where overall rates of household waste reduction behaviours are low. Our results indicate that educational materials which target moral obligation and action planning may be particularly effective.

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